

# NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

## NEWS



## LETTER

A Research Center for Turf and Field Sports,  
their History and Social Significance

Middleburg, Virginia 22117

June 1976

Nancy Cole, Editor

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### THE NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

Your topic is horses or hounds or some other branch of sport. You have a school paper to write, a college thesis, a Ph.D. dissertation or even a book. You may need to extend a pedigree or to look up background material for a speech. Less purposefully, you may wish to look at first editions, fine bindings or illustrated books, or you may merely wish to add to your fund of general knowledge about field sports.

How and where should you begin? The National Sporting Library, Middleburg, Virginia, forty miles west of Washington, D. C., is housed in the 1804 brick mansion house known as "Vine Hill" which it shares with the weekly periodical, *The Chronicle of the Horse*. According to its masthead this is "A Research Center for Turf and Field Sports, their History and Social Significance." The main reading room contains horse magazines from all over the world as well as Stud Books and other volumes frequently consulted. On the lower floor is the Librarian's office, a room for books received but not yet catalogued, and a room with two readers for microfilms of early newspapers and periodicals, and two machines for reproducing pages of books or magazines requested by readers. Below ground is the fireproof, air-conditioned, humidity controlled vault with shelves for 6,000 volumes where the most valuable books and manuscripts are kept. Reputedly this is the only public library in the country devoted solely to sport.

The best way to use the National Sporting Library is to visit it in person - to sightsee, to browse, to check for a particular piece of information or to carry on research, minor or major. Failing this, there is the mail. The Library will try to help you with special problems or it will tell you what books to read and where you may either consult them or buy them, if you are studying an entire subject.

The Library both serves the public and solicits its support through the "Friends of the National Sporting Library" details about which appear below. We hope that you will come to visit us; that you will give us the opportunity to add to your knowledge and pleasure; and that we may help you in your quest for information, general or specific. By the same token we hope that you will help the Library by enrolling as a Friend.

Mr. Alexander Mackay-Smith  
Curator  
The National Sporting Library  
Middleburg, Virginia 22117

Dear Mr. Mackay-Smith:

I just wanted to thank you once more for all your help during my visit to The National Sporting Library yesterday. Having access to your collections was a real treat, but I especially appreciated your help in locating materials relating to William Woodward's English sporting paintings; the Fairfax Harrison books had

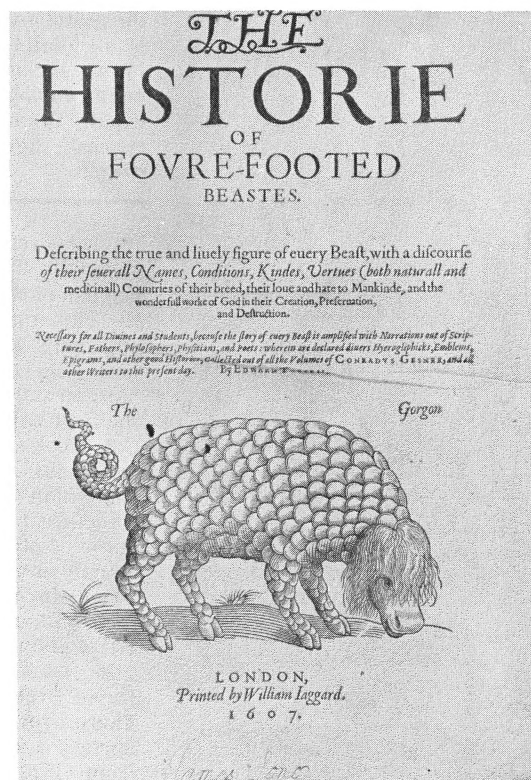
information that I never dreamed of finding, and I literally glowed with pleasure during the entire drive back to Baltimore! I would like very much to return to The National Sporting Library, perhaps sometime in June.

Again, thank you so much for your kindness and greatly appreciated help! Yesterday's trip was just as pleasurable to me as it was beneficial to my research.

Sincerely,

Eileen D. O'Brien  
Research Associate

(Editor's note, Miss O'Brien has been commissioned by The Baltimore Museum of Art to research and catalogue the paintings of race horses by Stubbs, Sartorius and J. F. Herring, Sr. which are hung in a separate wing of the museum.)

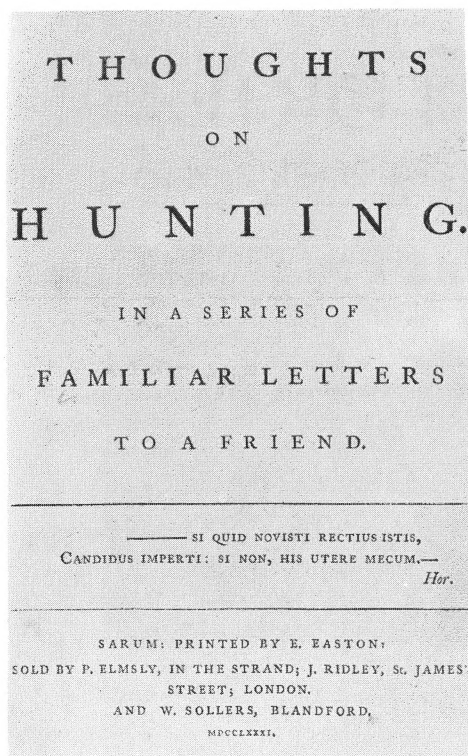


Recently presented to the Library is a copy of Edward Topsell's famous *Natural History*. The Donor was Thomas E. Marston for many years connected with the rare book division of the Beinecke Library at Yale.

# FOXHUNTING COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

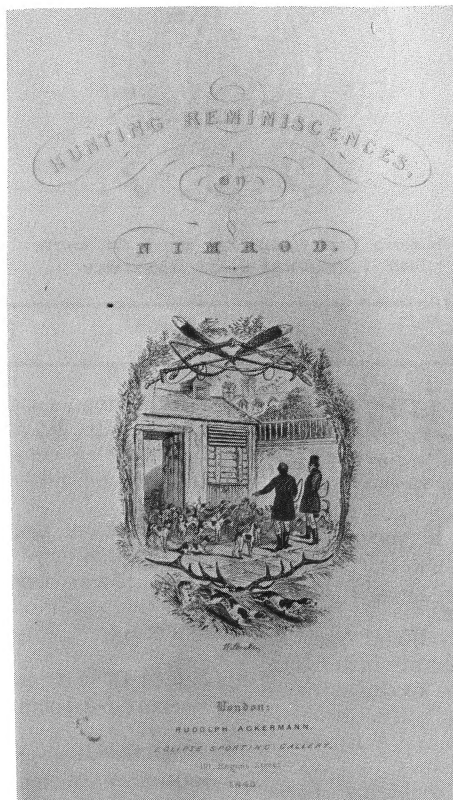
The National Sporting Library, founded in 1954, has, over the years, almost entirely through gifts, built up an important collection of books, magazines and manuscripts on foxhunting. This is divisible into two sections, Britain and Ireland on the one hand, the United States and Canada on the other. Among the major donors have been Edward Durell, George E. Ferneley, Mrs. Eleanor Langley Fletcher, Mrs. Fletcher Harper, Mrs. Howard Linn, Alexander Mackay-Smith, Mrs. John J. McDonald, Harry T. Peters Jr., Mrs. Eva G. Stewart, and Joseph B. Thomas IV, the latter having donated the library of his father, author of "Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages".

The earliest book in the collection is "The Art of Hunting" by William Twici who flourished from 1315 to 1326, a modern printing of the original text in translation. There is a facsimile reproduction of Thomas Turberville's "Book of Hunting", published in London in 1576. Coming down to more modern times, the Library is the fortunate possessor of that cornerstone for all who hunt a pack of foxhounds, Peter Beckford's "Thoughts on Hunting", the first edition, published anonymously at Sarum, England, in 1781, a fine, clean copy in its original full morocco binding — this



A first edition of the first book on modern foxhunting published in 1781 and still considered to be the best ever written. The author was Peter Beckford.

(Photo by Allen)



Charles James Apperley, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Nimrod", the greatest of all hunting correspondants, is famous for his accounts of the majority of British hunts during the 1820's and 30's. He is equally famous for his "Hunting Reminiscences" here illustrated in the first edition.

was generously donated in 1975 by Mrs. Redmond Toerge. It also has the other English classics on the art and science of the huntsman, books growing out of the enormous popularity which foxhunting, particularly in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, achieved in England during the first half of the nineteenth century — Col. Cook's "Observations on Foxhunting", 1836; "Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman" by Thomas Smith, 1838; Radcliffe's "Noble Science", 1838; Vyner's "Notitia Venatica", 1841; Surtees' "Analysis of the Hunting Field", 1845-1846; "The Meynellian Science", 1848, and so forth. In modern times there is Lord Willoughby de Broke's "Hunting the Fox", 1920; Isaac Bell's "Foxiana", 1939, and David Brock's "To Hunt the Fox", 1920; There are the Hunting Tours of Nimrod, Surtees and "Cecil" (Cornelius Tongue) from 1826 to 1864. There are many histories of individual hunts and many biographies of famous foxhunters, notably those of Peter Beckford (1740-1811) and of James John Farquherson, (1784-1872) Beckford's disciple, both written by

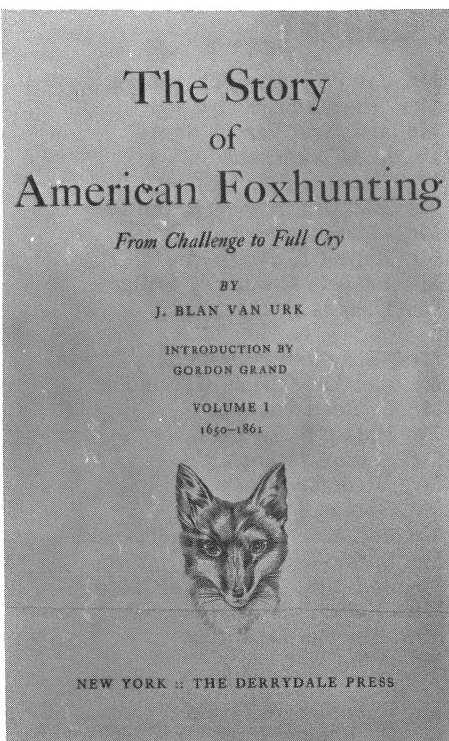
Alexander Henry Higginson, President of the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America from 1915 to 1931. The library has many fine runs of early British sporting magazines including a complete set (1792-1870) of the greatest of them all known simply as "The Sporting Magazine", donated by Alexander Mackay-Smith. There are many foxhunting books illustrated by leading 20th century artists — Lionel Edwards (including 2 volumes of his "Shires and Provinces"), Cecil Aldin, George Denholm Armour, F. A. Stewart and John Charlton. There are also many other titles of comparable interest among the more than 300 volumes in this section.

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## AMERICAN FOXHUNTING

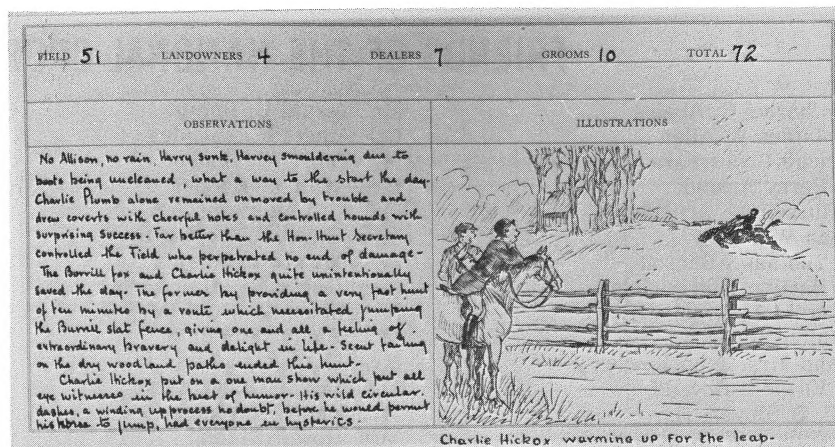
The section on American foxhunting is, appropriately, even stronger. The first group to pool their resources to show sport in this field was the Gloucester Fox Hunting Club, founded by a group of Philadelphia gentlemen in 1766, flourished until 1818, its history by William Milner, published in 1830. The Library has the 2nd edition, privately printed by Ernest Gee in 1927. Most of the surviving information about early American foxhunting was published by John Stuart Skinner in the two magazines which he founded, our first agricultural magazine, "The American Farmer" which included first American sports column in 1825, and our first sporting magazine, "The American Turf, Register and Sporting Magazine", founded in 1829. The Library has the relevant issues of the first and a complete set of the second, with all the plates. Col. Frederick G. Skinner carried on his father's chronicles of foxhunting, his essay being republished in Harry Worcester Smith's "A Sporting Family of the Old South", also in the Library. In microfilm it has all the known issues of "The Spirit of the Times", a sporting weekly published in New York which, in various forms, lasted from 1831 to 1902. It also has a long run of the Post-Civil War weekly, "Turf, Field and Farm" of which the Sporting Editor was Col. Fred Skinner. The classic histories are here: — Joseph B. Thomas, "Hounds and Hunting through the Ages", 1926; J. B. van Urk, "The Story of American Foxhunting", Derrydale Press, Vol. I 1940, Vol. II 1941; and Alexander Mackay-Smith, "The American Foxhound", 1747-1967, published 1968 (with the two supplements), "American Foxhunting, An Anthology", 1970, and "The Songs of Foxhunting", 1974. There are the two by Frank Sherman Peer, "Cross Country with Horse and Hound", 1902, and "The Hunting Field with Horse and Hound", 1910. Invaluable for the study of individual hunts are the two books of A. Henry Higginson, in collaboration with C. Julian Ingersoll Chamberlain, "The Hunt of the United States and Canada," 1908, and "Hunting in the United States and Canada", 1928. Richard C. Plater was the donor of books belonging to his uncle, Edward Gay Butler, a judge in the famous





One of the classics of American foxhunting literature, this is the first of a projected four volume work only two of which were ever published (1940 and 1941).

English vs. American Hound match in 1905 in the Middleburg—Upperville, Virginia, area between the English hounds of A. Henry Higginson and the American hounds of Harry Worcester Smith, at which time Mr. Butler was Master of the Blue Ridge Hunt in the Shenandoah Valley. This gift included two rarities — “Fox Hunting in America” (1 of 100 copies, 1912) by Allen Potts, Clerk of the foxhound match, and “The American Foxhound” by Thurston J. Rostad (1905), a series of articles on the foxhound field trial strains. There is Gen. Roger Williams “Horse and Hound”, 1905, emphasising the Walker and other field trial strains, and George Garrett’s “Fifty Years with Fox and Hounds” (1938) on the July strain. Bob Lee Maddux is represented by “Hill Topping” (1951). There are the reminiscences of Frank Gray Griswold, “Horses and Hounds”, 1926; by Harry Page, “Over the Open” (1925); and the several books of Stanley Reeve beginning in 1921. There are three major titles in Mason Houghland’s (1958, a presentation copy from the author) and William P. Wadsworth’s “Riding to Hounds in America”, N. D. Very special are the two facsimile volumes of Betty Babcock’s Diary, 1935-1937, long time Secretary of the Meadow Brook Hunt, each day illustrated with her delightful drawings. In the manuscript division there are the collected papers of Harry Worcester Smith; records of the Meadow Brook Hounds kept by Ralph N. Ellis, M.F.H., 1895-1906; letters and papers relating to Virginia’s Piedmont Hunt, 1915-1930 donated by Kitty Slater and Ann Gochenour; and a series of note



A leaf from The Diary of Betty Babcock, Secretary of the Meadow Brook Hunt. Her diaries for the season 1935-36 were published privately in facsimile through the good offices of Harry T. Peters, MFH.

books kept by the late Joseph B. Johnson of Sperryville, Virginia, a founding M.F.H. of the Rappahannock Hunt (1926) and associate of Joseph B. Thomas, containing hound pedigrees from 1900 to 1945. There is also a photographic section — pictures of the Meadow Brook Hunt 1895-1906; by Bert Clark Thayer of the Warrenton Hunt in the 1930’s; and by Thomas Neil Darling of the Middleburg, Orange County and Piedmont Hunts in the 1940’s. Finally there is foxhunting fiction — the complete Derrydale Press series of stories by Gordon Grand, the three volumes of “Gallops” by David Gray and many other works.

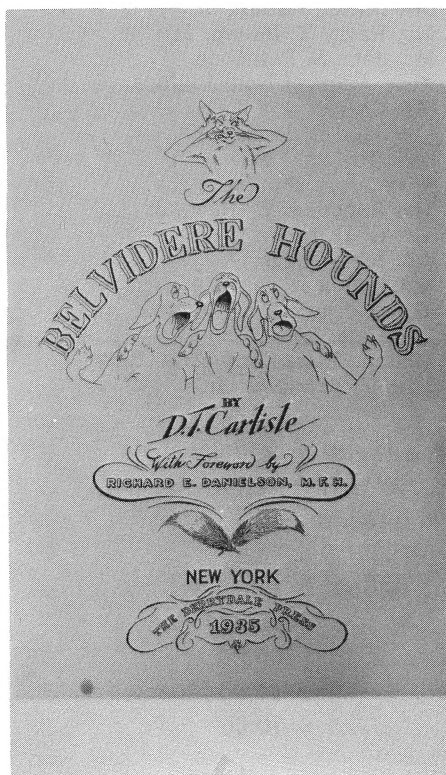
The list is indeed a long one, but there are still important gaps which, hopefully, will be filled by Friends of the National Sporting Library.

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## PORTRAIT OF HARRY WORCESTER SMITH

The National Sporting Library, through the good offices of William Wood Prince, M.F.H. of the Mill Creek Hunt, Wadsworth Illinois, has recently received on long term loan from The Saddle and Sirloin Club, Chicago, the water color portrait of Harry Worcester Smith painted in July 1928 by Richard B. Adams at Lordvale, Mr. Smith’s estate near Worcester, Massachusetts. The portrait, full length standing, shows Mr. Smith in the evening dress of the Grafton Hunt which he founded in 1903, serving as Master and Huntsman until the hunt was disbanded in 1913 and the hounds sold to the Meadow Brook Hunt, Long Island. Mr. Smith wears a scarlet evening coat with Grafton buttons, white tie etc. with black silk knee breeches, stockings and pumps. The portrait was painted in the Lordvale library, one of the outstanding libraries in the country devoted to horse and hound, and Mr. Smith is shown resting his left arm on two massive tomes deposited on a counter, with books above and books below, while he looks towards a window shown on the extreme right. Against this is leaning framed map of the Piedmont country (Upperville-Middleburg, Virginia) in which the Grafton American hounds beat the Middlesex English hounds in the famous match of November 1905. The scarlet coat and beautiful bindings of the books make for a most colorful picture.

(Editor’s Note: Harry Worcester Smith has long been recognized as one of Americas leading Sportsmen and the Adams portrait joins the collected papers of Harry Worcester Smith which were acquired by The National Sporting Library some 15 years ago.)



D. T. Carlisle’s delightful cartoons of “The Belvidere Hounds” originally published in “The Sportsman”, Richard E. Danielson, Editor, were collected and published by The Derrydale Press in 1935.

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